

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Division and Branch Chiefs

19 July 1954

SUBJECT: Preparation of Gaps in Information Requirements

1. In a number of instances recently, ERA supervisors and analysts who visited Agency installations abroad have reported serious shortcomings in the system of ERA's collection requirements. Some of the principal difficulties in servicing our requirements, from the point of view of the field stations, appear to stem from the multiplicity of unrelated and uncoordinated requests for information and from the lack of any systematic organization of our priority requirements for economic information. Another difficulty seems to stem from the fact that the field collectors usually lack sufficient knowledge of the existing state of our information concerning particular industries or sectors of the various Bloc economies.

2. After a series of discussions on requirements problems, it has been decided tentatively to have all appropriate ERA branches prepare Caps in Information Requirements, listing priority requirements in each major subject for each country within their field of responsibility. An example of such a Requirement is attached. It is proposed to establish a formal project to cover the initial preparation of these Requirements statements, with an appropriate allocation of manhours and due dates, and it is also the intent that the Requirements should be revised annually, or more often where necessary.

3. Several of these Gaps in Information Requirements have already been prepared by some EKA Branches and have been in use for about a year. They have been given wide distribution and were very well received by field collectors. Although it is recognized that the initial preparation of these Requirements will take considerable time and work, it is hoped that they will ultimately reduce the total amount of time that the Branches must spend in preparing and revising requirements. They should eliminate the need for the submission of gaps in intelligence requirements upon the completion of specific research projects. They should also reduce the number of individual requirements which a Branch will find it necessary to submit to St/I during the year, since all important gaps in information would be noted in the Branch's basic set of Gaps in Information Requirements. They should also make it easier for a Branch to prepare requirements tailored to a specific source who has become available and should facilitate the periodic up-dating of current intelligence requirements for inclusion in the OCI Periodic Requirements Lists (PRL). Finally, by providing field collectors with background information and an indication of our priority needs, the Gaps in Information Requirements should result ultimately in an improvement in the quality of economic reporting from the field.

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